

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
2800 COTTAGE WAY
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95825-1898



Thanks to Local Organizations and Merchants

Avenue Hardware, Magnolia Mobile Home Park, Association for Retarded Citizens, Kinko's, Ventura Unified School District Office, Red Barn Market, Red Barn Liquors, Vista Del Monte, AERO Oilfield Co., Fine Line PreCasting, McKee Street Market, Casitas Springs Market, Dahl's Market, Avenue Library, E.P. Foster Library, Walnut Tree Mobile Home Park, Ramada Clock Tower Inn, Ventura Police Main Street Store Front, Gourmet Oriental, Advance Cash, Taco Bell, Radio Shack, Papa John's, CMH Health Clinic, Mission Dental Clinic, Kragens, Ventura Brake, Yolie's Mexican, Rent-a-Center, Subway, Perfect Cuts, Rite Aid, Pro Nails, Mission Shop, Mission School, Top Hat Burgers, Ventura Museum, Jonathari's, Patagonia, Women's Health Center, Surfboard Shop, Gallegos Services, Central Market, Catholic Services, Avenue Florist, and all the other local businesses that helped.

Special kudos go to the Westside Community Council, Westside Police Store Front, and the Avenue Community Church.

Thanks for helping your community!

Local businesses are invited to a seminar on Emergency Preparedness. Call 805/641-9494 for information.

Casitas Dam Up

Issue #5

Public Affairs Office
Bureau of Reclamation
June 5, 2000

This newsletter is designed to keep neighbors of Casitas Dam informed about construction and related issues. It will be published as needed throughout the project.

When you have questions regarding the status of work at the dam, truck traffic, or other concerns, please call the general information line: 805/641-9494



Casitas Dam Project Manager to Join State Safety of Dams Team

William "Bill" Pennington, who has led Reclamation's effort to modernize Casitas Dam, retired from the Department of the Interior June 1, 2000. Bill has accepted a position with the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) and will lead their northeastern California safety of dams program. He leaves Federal service after 31 years with Reclamation and a 2-year stint in the Air Force.

Bill earned his Civil Engineering degree from California State University, Sacramento, while working as an Engineering Technician in Reclamation's Division of Design and Construction. Recently, he served on the interagency team developing the hydrologic analysis of flood operations below Folsom Dam on the American River.

On the Casitas Dam modification job, it has been Bill's genuine concern, honesty, and follow-through that have maintained credibility with the public, despite the project's many challenges. "I really enjoyed working on the Casitas Dam project," commented Bill. "I will always have a special feeling for the people of Ventura." Reclamation senior engineer, Gary Egan, will assume the project manager role.

An avid fisherman, Bill will undoubtedly enjoy his new territory, which spans five Sierra counties and includes over 150 dams and other facilities overseen by the State.

Reclamation's loss is definitely DWR's gain! Best wishes, Bill!

VENTURA COUNTY WANTS YOU! Volunteers Needed for Special Community Programs

Ventura County is looking for a "few good men--and women" in the Casitas Springs, upper Ventura Avenue, and Casitas Vista Road areas to sign up for summer programs. New classes include: CENT--Citizens Emergency Response Team, First Aid, and the Citizens' Academy. For details, contact Holly Tatroe, Captain of Volunteer Services, Ojai Police Station, 805/646-1414. This is a great opportunity to begin a personal and neighborhood program for disaster preparedness.

Contractor Making Steady Progress on Phase 2 Work

Despite spells of heavy rain this spring, Phase 2 modifications at Casitas Dam continue on schedule. Work on the embankment did stop from the end of January through mid-March when approximately 20 inches of rain fell at Lake Casitas. Currently, trucks deliver daily an average of 10,000 cubic yards of material from the "borrow area" on the northwest side of the reservoir for construction of the berm. The berm is approximately 60 feet under its final elevation of 430 feet, which will be reached by mid-August.

The dewatering system remains in operation, although three wells were decommissioned when the berm rose above them. Noise monitoring continues on-site and at nearby residences. Monitoring of discharge into Coyote Creek shows water quality is remaining well within required limits.

Work continues also on the modernization of the dam's outlet works structures. Hydraulic mechanisms for gate operation are being upgraded, and the 8.5-foot diameter intake tunnel is being reinforced with steel liner plates. The 48-inch intake pipe is being secured all along the inside of the tunnel to withstand earthquake movement.

Night Moves

If occasionally you hear noise at night from Casitas Dam, be assured that we haven't resumed night shift construction on the dam. However, employees are on-site 24 hours a day, inspecting

the dam and repairing equipment in preparation for the next day's work. Crews have been reminded, though, to avoid backing up vehicles and other activities that will keep folks downstream from getting a good night's rest.

Since the crest widening work was completed last December, construction work at Casitas Dam has been limited to the day shift. With the onset of daylight saving time and summer weather, Barnard Construction recently changed the day shift to start at 6:00 a.m., which is permitted under their contract. However, with downstream residents in mind, Reclamation is in the process of resetting the shift to begin at 7:00 a.m., Monday through Saturday.

You may notice that noise levels during the day are increasing as the berm rises on the face of the dam. Without buildings and trees to obstruct it, the sound of dump trucks and excavators travels farther and louder. Monitoring continues to ensure that the noise does not exceed permissible levels.

Second Quarterly Siren Test Goes Well

At noon on Wednesday, April 12, 2000, the test of the Casitas Dam Siren System went off without a hitch. Representatives from Ventura City and County, Reclamation, and system designer, Acoustic Technology, Inc.,

monitored the test from various locations to assess system performance. The test was considered successful in all respects.

Margaret Merryman, Chair of the Westside Community Council, monitored the system test along with reporters from newspapers, TV, and radio, at the corner of Ventura Avenue and Center Street. The results were well-covered the following day in articles in both the Ventura County Star and the Our Times section of the Los Angeles Times - Ventura Edition.



Tour participants view construction activity at dam.

The Westside Community Council played an important part in planning the publicity program for the April test. Council representatives worked with local and Reclamation officials to develop and distribute letters, flyers, and magnets with the siren test schedule in both English and Spanish. Public service announcements were also carried by local radio stations and Avenue Cable Channel 6.



Donna Potter, Reclamation, greets resident outside VON's.

The day before and the day of the test, Reclamation representatives were at VON's supermarket giving away free "Casitas Dam--It's Safe!" T-shirts to area residents. As part of the thorough outreach program, this personal effort was made to ensure residents were informed about the upcoming test and to get their feedback on publicity efforts. Most residents said they had received a letter in the mail and had put the free magnet they found inside on their refrigerator for future reference.

In the future, regular quarterly tests will take place at noon, the second Wednesday of January, April, July, and October. Otherwise, the siren system will only be activated in the very remote event of flooding from Casitas Dam.

All those snazzy blue T-shirts are gone, but magnets and other informational materials are available by calling 805/641-9494.

Environmental Protection and Restoration

Last March, a group of interested residents were escorted to an overview point and briefed on construction progress and environmental activities. Mary Marshall, an Environmental Specialist with Reclamation, explained on-going environmental protection measures and outlined the general plan for restoration after construction is complete. The primary habitats to be restored include oak woodland in the area used by the contractor to stockpile materials; oak and walnut woodland, coastal sage scrub, and annual grassland along the reservoir haul road; and coastal sage scrub, chaparral, and annual grassland in the borrow site.

As soon as construction winds up in September, impacted areas will be graded and seeded with native plants. Native oaks will be planted near the dam. Throughout the fall and winter, the areas will be carefully monitored and additional seeding or container planting will continue as needed. A 3 to 5-year monitoring and maintenance period will likely be required to ensure successful revegetation of all areas affected by the project.

This work will be accomplished under contract with the Santa Barbara office of the URS Corporation (formerly Woodward-Clyde). Public briefings will be held beginning in the fall. In the meantime, your comments and questions are welcome. Please contact Mary Marshall at 916/978-5284.



Mary Marshall, Reclamation, discusses environmental restoration with interested residents.